



Senator Eide's Week in Review
March 28-April 1

In the Spotlight: Budget Crunch

Legislators are deep into budget negotiations. As the end of session approaches (April 24th) the pressure is on to move the budget writing process forward. Governor Chris Gregoire has already released her Operating Budget proposal and the Senate and House of Representatives are hard at work crafting their own versions.

Drafting budget proposals in tough economic times is a long and painful process for everyone involved. Legislators are faced with the challenge of choosing which vital services to cut. Often, there are many differing opinions on how to balance the state budget which can make budget negotiations slow.

The House of Representatives is planning on releasing its Operating Budget proposal Monday. After all the budgets are presented, the Senate and House of Representatives will negotiate differences to create one cohesive budget.

Continuing Budget Challenges:

This year, legislators are faced with the difficult task of crafting the state budget for the 2011-13 biennium. In the last two years the Governor and the legislature have cut \$12 billion from the state budget—and this year it looks like we will have to cut \$5.2 billion more.

Contact Information:

Olympia Office:
305 Legislative Building
Olympia, WA 98504-0430

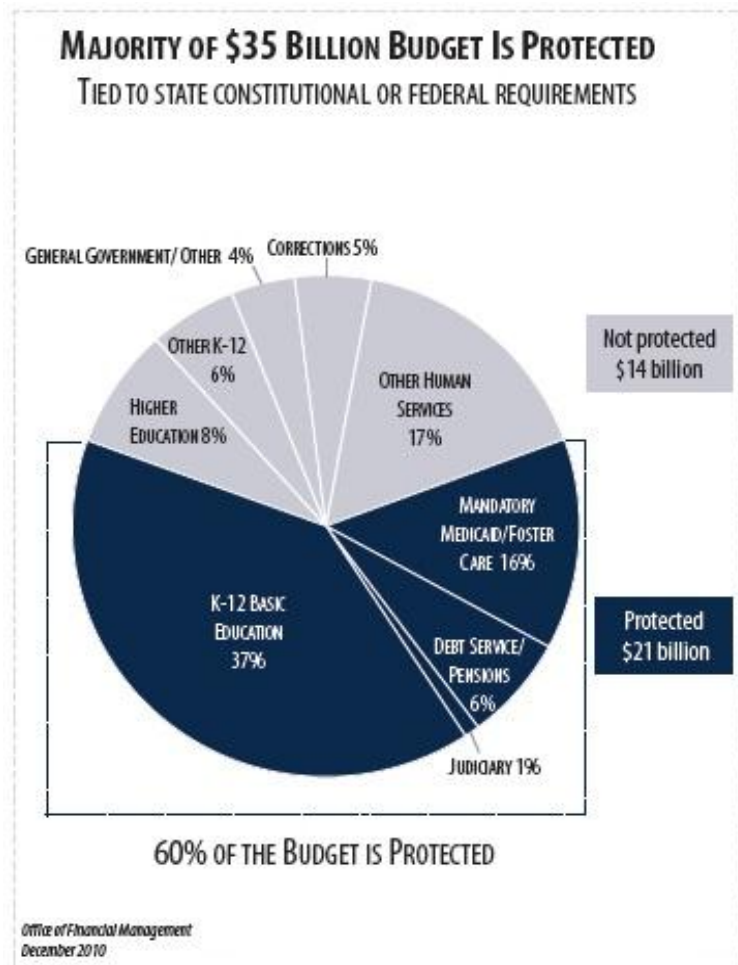
Phone: (360) 786-7658

Toll-free legislative hotline:
1-800-562-6000

TTY/TDD Hearing impaired
hotline: 1-800-635-9993

E-mail:
tracey.eide@leg.wa.gov

Web site:
<http://senatedemocrats.wa.gov/senators/eide>



BUDGET RESOURCES

[Budget Calculator: Try your hand at balancing the state budget!](#)

[Budget Information](#)

[Citizen's Guide to the Budget](#)

[Legislative Guide to Washington State Property Taxes](#)

[Citizen's Guide to K-12 Finance](#)

Last session the legislature passed a limited tax package of \$761 million to fund critical education, health care and social service programs. Last year, I voted for this revenue package because I am a strong supporter of our schools, ensuring children and families have access to health care as well as helping those in great need. Last November, Washington and 30th District voters overwhelmingly passed Initiative 1107 (two out of every three voters) and in doing so eliminated the \$761 million that funded so many needed programs. Voters state-wide and in the 30th District also passed Initiative 1053 that requires a two-thirds majority to close tax loopholes or increase revenue. I have heard and received your message loud and clear.

As the economic recession continues, the legislature is facing yet another shortfall: \$5.2 billion. Of Washington's \$35 billion budget, 60% is protected by Constitutional or federal requirements. That means we have \$14 billion from which we must cut \$5.2 billion. This area is made up of human services such as health care and job training, corrections and prisons, higher education and various critical K-12 programs.

I am deeply concerned that vital and valued services will be cut. Many of these are public services that I took office to protect—like public education, public safety and health care. But, we are faced with a stark reality and have few options to choose from. As the coming weeks unfold, I will be sure to stay in constant communication to keep you updated on our progress.

Precious Metals Bill:

I am pleased to announce [HB 1716](#), sponsored by Representative Asay, passed out of the Senate this week with overwhelming bipartisan support. This legislation is designed to help crack down on increasing home burglaries and thefts of gold and other precious metals. The bill was drafted based on concerns from the City of Federal Way and the Federal Way Police.

An amendment was added to the bill in the Senate to clarify definitions in the bill. House Bill 1716 will now be sent back to the House of Representatives for a consensus vote to adopt this new amendment before going to the Governor for signature into law.

Foreclosure Assistance:

Banks would be required to sit down with homeowners and explore options to avoid foreclosure, under the terms of legislation passed this week by the Senate. [House Bill 1362](#), also known as the Foreclosure Fairness Act, had earlier passed the House but was amended by the Senate so it now must go back to the House for reconsideration.

It's easy to think of a foreclosure as someone else's problem, but it's occurring on a scale today that is distressing neighborhoods and impacting far more than the owner of the foreclosed property. The Foreclosure Fairness Act requires lenders to communicate early in the foreclosure process to give homeowners the best opportunities to get help from a housing counselor and provides a mediation process when a housing counselor or attorney deems it appropriate.

This legislation also requires financial institutions which issue more than 250 notices of default in the preceding year to pay a \$250 fee on each notice of default. The fee will primarily fund more housing counselors but will also fund outreach campaigns and enforcement dollars for the Attorney General's Office.

Getting Tougher on Drunk Drivers:

Driving while drunk is not acceptable. As a State Senator I have introduced legislation to toughen Washington's drunk driving laws and consistently voted for stronger policies to get intoxicated drivers off our roads. Some still haven't gotten the message. Last June, three students from Decatur High School were driving southbound on I-5 when their car was struck by a drunk driver. Two of the Decatur students were killed in the crash.

This week the Senate Transportation Committee held public hearings on House of Representatives' bills pertaining to harsher punishments for people driving under the influence (DUI). On Thursday, the Senate Transportation Committee passed [HB 1789](#), a bill relating to accountability for persons driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs. This bill combines two good DUI bills, [HB 1167](#) and [HB 1789](#), into one bill for purposes of efficiency and expediency.

House Bill 1789 does the following:

- Imposes a \$200 fee on offenders.
- The offense of DUI becomes a felony if the person has ever previously been convicted of a felony DUI in Washington.
- A person convicted of negligent driving in the first degree or reckless driving arising out of a DUI must install an ignition interlock device for six months on cars operated by the person. These devices are proven to prevent drunks from driving.
- Expands the definition of "prior offense" for subsequent DUI offenses to include vehicular assault or vehicular homicide, based on a DUI.

- Allows counties to establish and operate DUI courts for nonviolent offenders.
 - The minimum requirements for participants in this Court are: a showing that the offender would benefit from alcohol treatment; the offender has not been previously convicted of a serious violent offense or sex offense, vehicular homicide, vehicular assault, or an offense involving a firearm.
- The Washington Traffic Safety Commission may develop and maintain a registry of qualified victim impact panels and may work with organizations to develop a registry.

Page I Sponsored This Week:

Matthew Straume, from Federal Way, 9th grader at Seattle Christian School



Senator Eide with Page Matthew Straume

This Week's Visitors from the 30th District:

If you are ever in Olympia and are from the 30th District, please visit my office: Legislative Building 305. I would love to see you!

*Becky Fife; Special Education Teacher

*Lyndsey Ryerson; WEA

*Narscisa Hodges; Interpreter

*Jeanne Burbidge; Federal Way City Council Member

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